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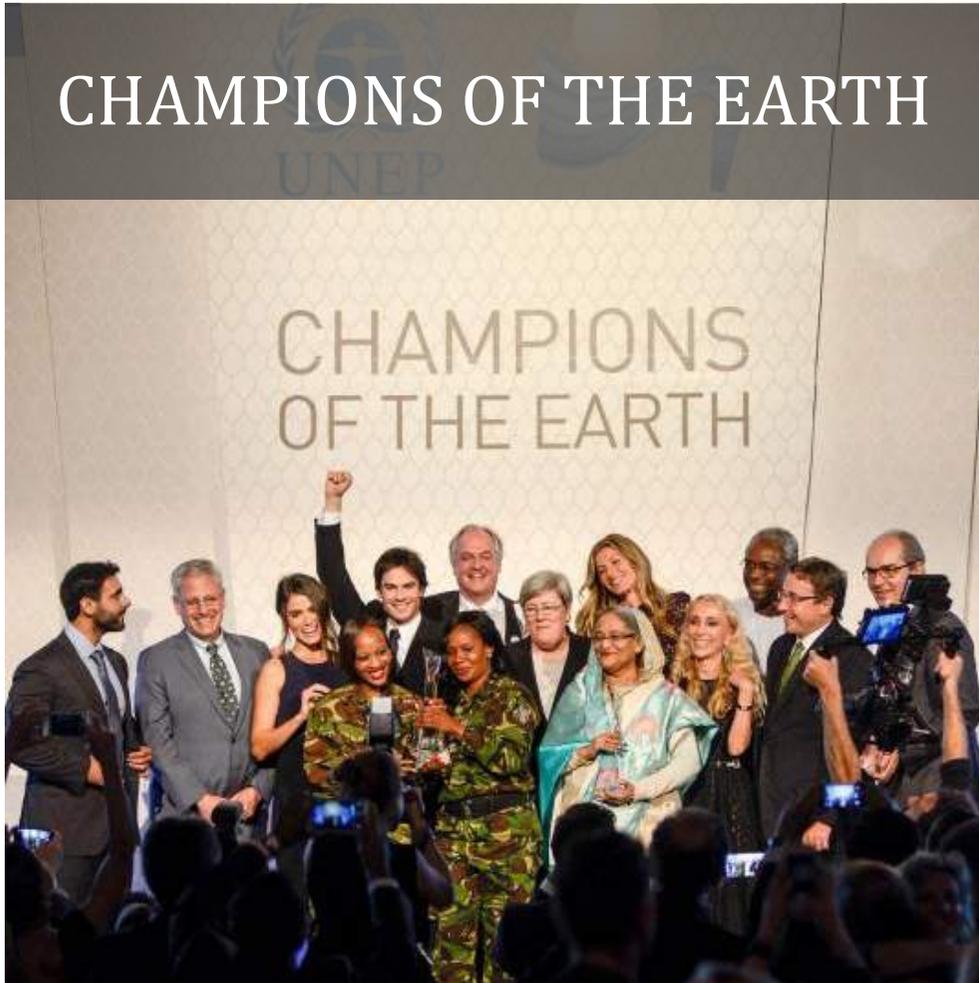
# NEWSLETTER NORTH AMERICA

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# Environmental Stewardship through the Arctic Council

As an Official Observer to the [Arctic Council](#), UNEP participated in the Senior Arctic Officials (SAO) meeting in Anchorage, Alaska in October to support the Council's environmental stewardship and sustainable development programs under the new U.S. Chairmanship. A special session was held for Observers to discuss the involvement of Observer States and Organizations in the work of the Council, particularly through Working Groups and Task Forces.

Patricia J. Beneke, UNEP's Regional Director for North America, reiterated the organization's support of the Arctic Council's environmental agenda and noted UNEP's ongoing engagement in the [Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna](#) (CAFF) Working Group. In particular, the SAO Chair commended the work of UNEP in supporting the [Arctic Migratory Bird Initiative](#) for the Americas Flyway.

Other key items on the Council's agenda in which UNEP is also engaged include: Arctic biodiversity; climate change; ocean pollution which includes the [Arctic Marine Strategic Plan](#) to address marine oil pollution, prevention and response; protection of indigenous people; and the development of an international agreement on Arctic scientific cooperation.



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# French Ameri-Can Climate Talks in the Lead up to COP21 in Paris



Left to right: Patricia Beneke, UNEP; Kathryn White, President & CEO of UNA-Canada; and The Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario

Building up to the Climate Conference in Paris (COP21), UNEP partnered with the French embassies in both Canada and the United States to organize and participate in the [FACTS \(French Ameri-Can Climate Talks\)](#) conference series. The events aimed to mobilize French, American, and Canadian public opinion on climate change and reinforce the dialogue between experts from these countries.

The FACTS series took place in twelve cities in the United States and Canada and involved renowned scientists, civil society representatives, NGOs, political figures, journalists and entrepreneurs.

UNEP Regional Director, Patricia J. Beneke, and Deputy Regional Director, Fatou Nodye, represented UNEP at the FACTS events and presented at four talks on a range of themes including: "Can Technology Halt Climate Change" in San Francisco, California; "Innovation and Engagement with the Private Sector" in Washington, D.C.; "Impacts of Sea Level Rise on Local Communities" in Miami, Florida; and "Health and Climate Change" in Toronto, Ontario.



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## The Pope's Call for Moral Action on Climate Justice

Thousands gathered outside the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. on 24 September to watch Pope Francis address a joint meeting of Congress. Supporting the Pope's message for climate justice was the "Moral Action on Climate Justice" rally on the National Mall that featured an all-star lineup of musicians, religious leaders and climate justice activists.

UNEP Regional Director, Patricia J. Beneke, and Deputy Regional Director, Fatou Ndoye, echoed the call for individual and collective action to care for the planet, and highlighted the importance of the UN's Sustainability Summit in New York and UN Climate Conference in Paris, as pivotal moments for leaders to address the most pressing and challenging issue of our time.

His Holiness Pope Francis also called for strong climate agreement during his [visit to the UN Environment Programme headquarters](#) in Nairobi, Kenya last month. Speaking from the heart of Africa to the world, he addressed the subject of climate change, an issue central to his tenure thus far, as Pontiff. UNEP Executive Director, Achim Steiner, praised Pope Francis' moral leadership on the environment saying it added global momentum to efforts to close the emissions gap and implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

[Speech by His Holiness Pope Francis](#)



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# Ten Billion Bulbs: Introducing the Global Lighting Challenge

Led by the [Clean Energy Ministerial](#) and UNEP through its [en.lighten initiative](#), the [Global Lighting Challenge](#) (GLC) is a race to reach cumulative global sales of 10 billion high-efficiency, high-quality and affordable advanced lighting products, such as light-emitting diode (LED) lamps. The GLC was announced at the White House at the "Catalyzing Markets for Off-Grid Clean Energy Access" forum in Washington, D.C., on 22 October and will be officially launched at the Paris Climate Conference.

Globally, electricity for lighting accounts for approximately 15% of power consumption and 5% of greenhouse gas emissions. A transition to efficient LED lamps worldwide would reduce CO2 emissions by 801 million tonnes annually, equivalent to displacing 684 coal-fired power plants. Currently, there are 1.4 billion people around the world who lack access to modern energy services, including reliable lighting, and are using energy sources like kerosene that pose serious environmental and health risks.

The U.S. has endorsed the GLC since its preliminary launch in May 2015, and has agreed to highlight and help accelerate existing national and international efficient lighting adoption activities. In addition, the U.S. has agreed to seek supporting actions, consistent with the GLC's guiding principles, such as promoting super-efficient and high-quality off-grid lighting systems.



## Global Lighting CHALLENGE

*A Clean Energy Ministerial Campaign*



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## FOOD WASTE

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### Portraying the Gravity of Food Waste through Art



Krysta Harden, Deputy Secretary, USDA



Artwork by Sami Khan, Global Winner, 23rd International Children's Painting Competition

More than a third of all of the food produced globally gets lost or wasted before reaching the dinner table. In the U.S. alone, approximately **60 million tonnes of food**, worth an estimated \$162 billion, is wasted ever year.

To showcase the gravity of food waste, UNEP partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to display the top North American submissions for UNEP's **23rd International Children's Painting Competition** at the USDA Headquarters in Washington, D.C. The exhibit features the global winner, Sami Khan, age 13, from Fremont, California. His entry was chosen from over 65,000 submissions from around the world.

"I was amazed by the vision and creativity the students showed when it came to understanding the significant impacts food waste has on our planet," said USDA Deputy Secretary, Krysta Harden. According to Fatou Ndoye, UNEP Deputy Regional Director, "The paintings dramatically illustrate the devastating impact that food waste and loss has on the environment. We strongly encourage governments and citizens alike to address this critical issue through efforts like our **Think.Eat.Save** and **Champions 12.3** initiatives."

The exhibit is open to the public and is seen by 4,000 - 6,000 employees and visitors per day.



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# Achieving the First U.S. Food Waste Reduction Goal

The [2015 Food Recovery Summit](#) was held in Charleston, South Carolina from 16-18 November, co-hosted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in conjunction with the Southeast Recycling Development Council. UNEP was one of the organizations featured in high-level discussions and hands-on practical sessions aimed at preventing food waste, expanding food reuse and donation, and increasing the recovery of discarded food.

In September, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the EPA announced the U.S. commitment to reduce food loss and waste by 50% by the year 2050. The Food Recovery Summit brought together stakeholders and representatives that can influence, contribute or control components of the food life cycle that will help to achieve this important target.

The [Think.Eat.Save.](#) initiative was featured as a global communications vehicle to stimulate behaviour change to prevent food waste. The Think.Eat.Save. campaign is a partnership between UNEP, [FAO](#) and Messe Düsseldorf, in support of the UN Secretary-General's Zero Hunger Challenge, which has added its authority and voice to efforts to stimulate global, regional and national actions, to encourage more sectors of society to act, through the exchange of inspiring ideas and projects.



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### Addressing the Illegal Wildlife Trade and Conserving Biodiversity

The illegal trade in wildlife topic was prominently featured in the margins of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in September in New York. A high-level side event was hosted by the WCS Central Park Zoo to celebrate the passage of the [UNGA Resolution on Tackling Illicit Trafficking in Wildlife](#) which included remarks from Member States, UN agency and civil society leaders.

On 30 September, Ibrahim Thiaw, UNEP Deputy Executive Director, gave a [speech](#) at an event hosted by the International Conservation Caucus Foundation which brought together government officials, including the Presidents of Gabon, Malawi and Tanzania, as well as heads of multilateral and UN agencies, to urgently address the wildlife crime crisis.

In November, at a workshop on [International Law and Wildlife Well-Being](#) hosted by the American Society of International Law at George Washington University, UNEP Programme Officer, Monika Thiele, participated in a panel on the "Role of Environmental Conventions and Organizations." She presented on the legal framework guiding UNEP's work in preventing



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